Heard at the Sign Of the Cauliflower

By W. O. M'GEEHAN

UNLESS Ptolemy Pharaoh, the well known Egyptian press agent, who carved out some interesting copy about 2000 B. C., was spoofing us, there was a lady by the name of Isis in his troupe who loved to hide herself and her personality behind a bunch of veils. Very few ladies, and, as a matter of fact, very few gents, in public life have tried that stunt since.

Certainly no heavyweight champions have wrapped themselves up in veils of mystery until the advent of Jess Willard. Of course, his eighth-ton of visible beef cannot be hidden, but just what the man behind the bulk and guarded by the regiment of managers, press agents, biographers and secretaries may be is hard to find out.

Persistent investigation seems to indicate that he is just 250 pounds of humanity. The syndicate does his thinking, Tom Jones does his talking, Secretary Archer does his writing and a corps of trainers does his exercising.

Once we had Willard corralled in a hotel room with Tom Jones. We started to question him with the view of ascertaining if there was any truth in the rumor that he was human. We went at it simply, but in a determined manner.

"How do you feel, Jess?" we demanded.

"How?" asked Mr. Willard, suspiciously.

"We feel fine," replied Tom Jones. "We are not the least bit fat. Of course, we are carrying a little extra weight. By the night of the fight we will be in perfect condition."

"This is nasty weather, don't you think, Mr. Willard?"

"How?" asked Willard anxiously.

"Oh, we think that it will clear up soon," replied Mr. Jones. "We will do our road work just the same. Of coures, we will have to be careful, because we do not want to catch cold again."

"Have you entirely recovered from that attack of grip?"

"How?" inquired Mr. Willard.

"That's funny," replied Tom Jones. "It wasn't the grip at all that we had. We just had a bad case of neuralgia. It was a sort of toothache."

"A toothache isn't funny," put in Willard suddenly.

"That's so," corrected Tom Jones. "You can quote us to that effect. A toothache is not funny."

And so the interview continued with Tom Jones acting as the mouthpiece of the champion. Only once more did the huge Kansan enter into the conversation.

"And when I while the best that there are in sight I hope that I will be allowed some time to myself. I had a hard time getting anything and I want to be left alone to enjoy it."

Perhaps that one frank, uncensored, unpress agented, unnovelized statement gave the key to the mystery. Jess Willard does not care for the limelight. He was not built for it mentally and he does not want it. The prestige of the championship, in which the other title holders revelled, simply annoys him. He likes the money for his family's sake.

BUT we venture to guess that if Jess Willard could go forth and work his eight hours on the farm or in the timber camp for the same amount of money he gets as champion he would not be fighting. He would tear loose from the syndicate and retire to private life. And in parting he would say to the best looking challenger: "Take the title, darn ye. But let me alone."

The fact that Willard took considerable punishment before he got to Johnson at Havana should preclude any question as to his courage. But we do not think that he is a ring fighter by temperament. In the limelight he is irritable and suspicious, but there is no doubt that when he is in his element, the farm or his home, he is all good nature. When one see him out of that element he somehow excites pity.

Willard lacks the "fighting face." In repose his features register sluggish good nature, as the movie men might say. He can get angry, but with a defensive instead of an aggressive anger.

Some people want to compare him to the sullen, growling Jeffries. It is not a fair comparison. Willard is thoroughly good natured. There is not a cruel streak in him. His apparent sulleness at times is rather due to diffidence. He doesn't exactly know what to make of all that has come to him.

SOMEBODY must have put it into the head of the champion that he should have a fighting face for the sake of the pictures. He tried to develop one, but it was not the least like the enraged grizzly fighting face of Jeffries, nor the blazing red face of John L. Sullivan. It seems now that Willard may have to enter the ring without a war countenance.

Personally, we think that a man may get along without the fighting face. It does not necessarily mean that its possessor is a dangerous gladiator. Take the case of Arthur Pelky. He has the ideal fighting face. It is one splash of ferocity, but there is hardly a heavyweight of any importance who has not knocked Pelky out at some time or other.

Of all the heavyweight champions Willard seems to like his job the least. John L. Sullivan revelled in it. James J. Corbett carried it off with impressive graciousness. Jeffries enjoyed it after his own sullen fashion. To Willard it is something of a bore. It is his livelihood, a magnificent livelihood, but not the one he would have chosen.

He became a fighter "because people would not let him alone" and because he had some children in need of shoes and other little necessities. Working on a Kansas farm and running a little livery stable did not promise to keep up with the insistent demands for more shoes. He read of $30,000 purses and made up his mind that he would get just one of those and retire in comparative affluence.

But he has found himself handcuffed to the championship, with its boresome obligations. Also he finds himself bound by chains to a syndicate. He is a reluctant Samson pushed to the fore by Curley, Jones and a regiment of promoters. Some day he may become as irritable as his prototype and kick that syndicate to pieces.

OUR old brown hat is off to his biographer and his diary writer. They are the most resourceful pair of fiction writers in this unimaginative age. They have worked with less dope than old Robert W. Chambers. If they once tried to give an idea as to what the real Willard was the biography would be blank and the diary would consist of the baffling monosyllable "How?"

In his early experience with cattle Willard must have obtained some intimate and practical knowledge of what it means to "have the bull by the tail." That is about what is happening to him now. He has a grip on the championship, and he does not know just how to release it. The syndicate has impressed upon him the idea that he cannot let it go. But one of these days he will release it through sheer boredom.

Willard does not enjoy the routine of training and the calisthenics. To him they are work, and monotonous work. Twelve hours of real labor on his own ranch would be part of a more pleasant routine to him. One of these days he is going in for that sort of enjoyment. Most of the money he has earned has gone into Indian land in the West. When Willard decides to take off that very weighty heavyweight crown and toss it into the nearest ash can he will settle down and become a happy rancher.

IF HE is of interest to interviewers then they may be able to get a whole sentence out of him on the condition of the crops or the price of steers. And if they put to him any questions as to the ethical aspect of mixed bouts he will feel at liberty to toss them out of the corral.

If Willard had really liked the fight game as John L. Sullivan or Corbett did he would have been a greater hero than either after his defeat of Jack Johnson at Havana. As it is he is only a quarter-ton of man, just an exaggerated human being, too big to be knocked out. That is why the fight fans' sympathies are with the challenger.

The great American public wants something to idolize and Jess refuses to be idolized. He doesn't like it, and he won't have it, despite the efforts of the syndicate. The public put a laurel crown on his brow and Jess covered it with his broad-brimmed hat.

Perhaps only five people know the real Jess Willard—Mrs. Willard and the four little Willards. And they seem to be thoroughly convinced that he is a most amiable and worthy person. As they are the only persons competent to judge, we are willing to admit that they are right.

BASEBALL SLANG TRACED TO ITS ORIGINAL FOUNT

Charlie Dryden Held To Be Responsible for the Present Day Jargon.

Back in the days when George Ade and Harry Weldon were writing baseball it was found that the diamond had a language of its own. Since their time the baseball jargon has been greatly embellished. Now, it might be said, there are a large number of American citizens who would greatly enjoy the chronicle of a game if they could get the English translation of it.

Charlie Dryden is the father of baseball slang. Dryden was the first newspaper writer who saw in a baseball game more than the box score. Much of the acceptable literature of modern training camps—stories of badger haircuts, badger pullings, red flannel undershirts, sword swallowers, etc.—dripped in lilting humor from Charlie Dryden's fountain pen. In those days he never used a typewriter, except to look at.

Dryden made the Great Zim a household phrase; he likened Ham Hyatt to a disappearing gun from the fact that he strutted out from the bench to hit in a pinch and then, after firing, was obscured from view again in the recesses of the dugout; he named Schulte "Wildfire" and he immortalized Frank Chance as the P. L. (Peerless Leader). There wasn't much that he didn't do.

The Dryden school of baseball journalism was incorporated with bylaws and a constitution. As accepted by the young baseball writers from Kalamazoo to Kansas City there was one fundamental object of the organization which never was to be violated, upon penalty of unceremonious ostracism. That was to call anything in baseball by its recognized name.

A baseball might be the horsehide, the pill, the old apple, the onion, the pellet, the spheroid, the circumlinear leather, or the egg. But plain baseball? Never!

Likewise, a bat might be a club, a war stick, a bludgeon, a crutch, a shillelagh, a willow, the ash, or hickory. But plain bat? Never!

Baseball slang hollied out like a balloon taking gas. It has grown in such a prodigious size that it much surely burst.

We laugh at the English newspaper reports of cricket games. Their beefiness and stolidity seem almost as perplexing as they are unconsciously humorous. But can you imagine an Englishman trying to make sense out of the average story of a baseball game?

He might more easily read Greek than understand such a passage as this:

"Two Indians were dead in their tracks when Peckinpaugh grabbed Graney's torrid hopper by the handle, did a maxixe toward second and expressed the pill over the air line route to Pipp for the double murder."

The Englishman might, with some reason, inquire why they didn't call a policeman.

And it is not at all certain that the cryptic conversation of the professional slangist wouldn't puzzle a few old-fashioned souls on this side of the Atlantic.

There has been so far, it seems, no neutral ground in the matter of baseball reviewing. Either slang and humor run riot down the column or history is enriched by several sticks of tyne relating the story of the game in plain four-cylinder English that holds aloof from slang phrase and idiomatic diamond chatter.

The writers who have cast their prayer rugs before the shrine of Pure English regard a baseball game with the same intense seriousness that an ordinary mortal might bring to play unon an operation for appendicitis his own!

There is no particular local color in baseball to these historians, and few characters. The dignity of the writing game has been preserved, and the duty to the diamond done when it is said:

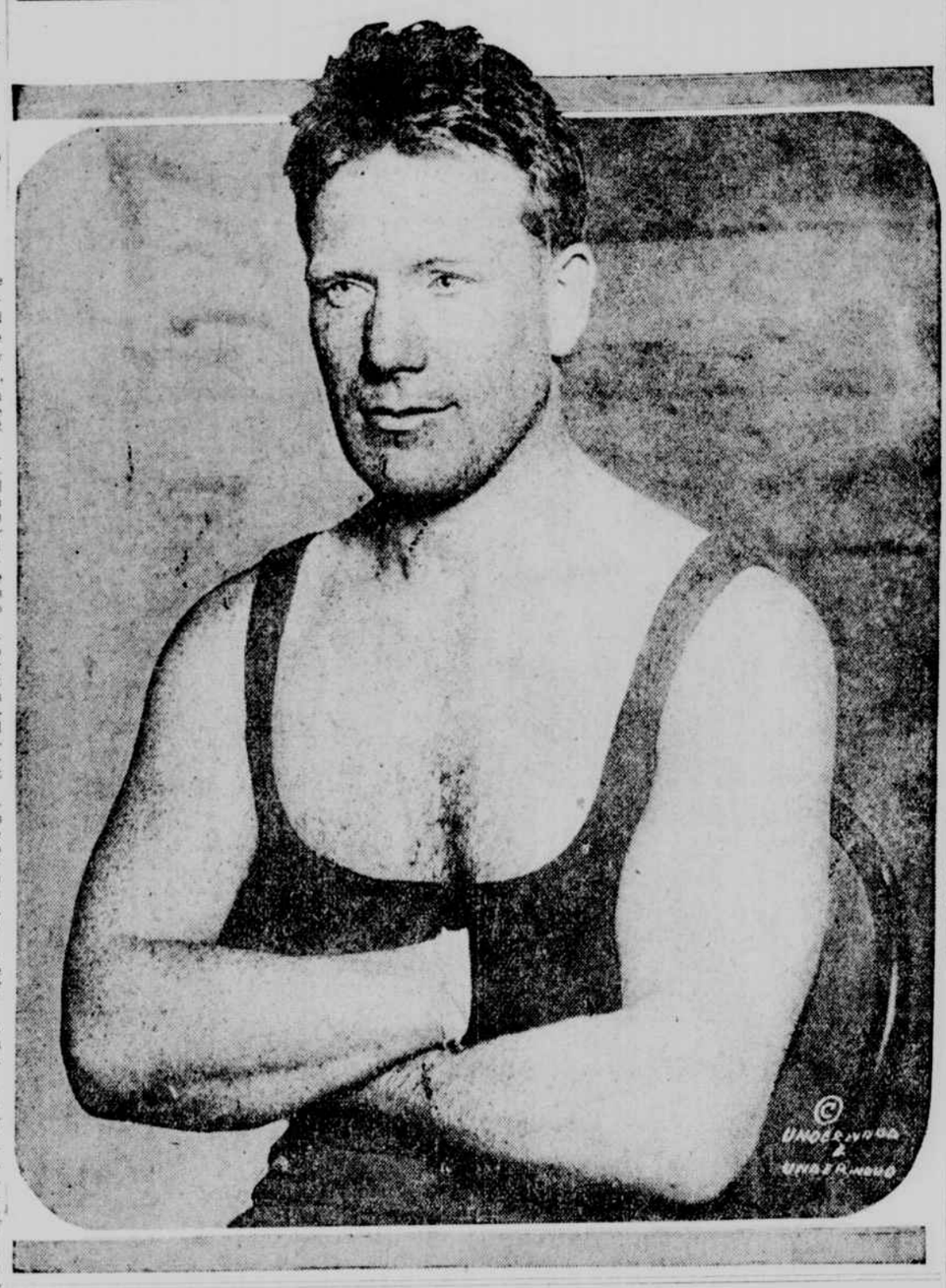
"By a strong batting rally in the eighth inning of yesterday's game at the Polo Grounds the Giants succeeded in overcoming an apparently insuperable lead of the St. Louis Cardinals and defeating the Mound City aggregation by the score of 11 to 9."

That is all right, too. It has its advantages. It can be read.

In a Western city some time ago a newspaper invited its readers to express their opinion as to whether they wou'd prefer to have the story of the game told in the vernacular or in English. As the writer recalls the issue it ended in a tie, or slang followers won by a slight margin. The margin, no doubt, would have been greater if the editor had been able to read some of the letters written by the disciples of Billy Baxter.

So there you are!

MORAN OR SUPERMAN?



THE SPORT LIGHT by Grantland Rice

The Survivor.

Jeffries passed with the winds adrifting,
Gone with the snows of the yesteryear;
Denton Young found the olive shifting
Back at last with the Crab and seer:
Larry the king and The Reel are slipping,
Gone forever is Nelson's gloat;
But still on the rampage, roaring, ripping,
Teddy alone has Doc Time's goat.

Where are the guys of the yester glory
Headline monarchs of days that were?
Crossed at last for a fresher story,
Swept away for a newer stir:
Does the Mack machine any longer matter?
Where do Ouimet and Travis hide?
But still out there in the clash and clatter
Teddy alone tops Time and Tide.

"You once figured," writes L. F. K., "that Willard and Moran were being paid entirely too much for a ten-round boxing match. But if they can draw in $100,000 at the gate, is there any reason why they shouldn't get $70,000 for their share?" That seems to be the answer. At present we can't think of any better one.

Uncertain Baseball Flesh.

Even the masters get stung here and there. John McGraw sent Red Ames and Heinie Groh to Cincinnati for Art Fromme. Art has now passed along the open trail, and, while Ames is no longer a Redbird, Groh has developed into the star third baseman of the National League. We'll go even further, and say the star third baseman of any league.

Groh and Herzog together form the best infield combination to the left of second base in baseball. For as Groh is the best third baseman in his league, so is Herzog the most valuable shortstop—not even excepting Bancroft or Maranville. If the right wing of the Redland infield is up to the left, Cincinnati, you have a flag contender for the first time in more years than you can remember.

The Renaissance of Swat.

When Homer smote his bloomin' lyre
And doubled down the left field line,
They cheered from Athens unto Tyre
And eager scouts begged him to sign;
"Some bloke," each whispered on his way;
"This kid can make 'em all go sit"—
I wonder what they'd think to-day
If they could see this Tycobb hit?

When Samson with his deadly clout
Jawboned the foe upon the spine,
He put a whole blamed clan to rout
And made his club a pennant nine;
"The greatest ever," rang the cries
From frenzied scribes who lamped the skit;
How dared they speak of Batting Eyes
Who never saw Ed Collins hit?

The Greatest.

Some one in camp started an argument the other day as to which was the greatest all-around performer—Jim Thorpe or Michael Angelo. Here are the statistics:

Thorpe—Greatest football player, Olympia winner, jumper, sprinter and big league ball player.

Angelo—Greatest painter, star sculptor, great musician, fine writer.

"Yes," some one said, "but Angelo never batted .300."

"He would have," said a defender, "if there had been any baseball in those days."

You are at liberty to make your own selection, and award your own sprig of laurel.

Why not enter Jess Willard? Jess gets $47,500 for one fight and $26,000 for his literary labors through the fiscal year just closing out. Also $150,000 with a circus.

Johnny Evers picks the Giants to finish as good as second. "I don't know what the material is," he said, "but I know what McGraw can do when he has a chance to make his authority count."

Pot Shots.

The race isn't always to the swift, but it is generally to the scared.

Even a dub may fall heir to a streak of form. It is only the habit that counts.

Only that portion of a man's game which is under control is worth sending into battle. The rest of it is a liability, rather than an asset.

Joe Jackson.

From up around .350 on to .400, Joe Jackson dropped to .308 last season. "Jackson will never be up among the leaders again," a prominent American League pitcher remarked recently.

We doubt this. Jackson is a great natural hitter—one of the greatest. He was a bit off last season, but there will be found the same slumps in the careers of all great batsmen, barring Cobb. Wagner one season dropped from .380 to .305 the next, and Lajoie dropped as low as .280, only to come back with a rush.

Jackson can hit, and, while he fell away in 1915, the change that carried him to Chicago from a losing club should help carry him back to within a stride or two of Cobb, where he belongs.

Some one remarked that Walter Johnson had lost a lot of his speed. "Since when?" asked Nunamaker, the Yank catcher. "In a game at the Polo Grounds late last summer, where he was in a hole, Johnson pitched me four balls, and I only saw one of them. If Johnson has lost his speed he has the greatest slow ball I ever saw, or ever heard hit a catcher's glove."

"Willard will retire before he is ever knocked out." This was at one time equally true of Sullivan, Corbett, Fitz, Jeffries and Johnson. The only time they ever retire is after the old haymaker has erased their names from the top.

"How would you like to be," asks R. J. R., "as big as Willard, as clever as Corbett and as aggressive as Sullivan?" Who would be left to fight? The money trust?

Throw your hat into the ring—
Only three weeks left till spring.

How young the training season is! Only ten recruits so far have been compared to Cobb, Matty or Wagner.

Welcome.

Out from the blizzards and out from the snow,
Out from the roystering breezes that blow,
Two ancient friends rally back to the strife—
"Pink of condition" and "Game of his life."

Preparedness for Spring at Fox Hills Golf Club

Young Herbert Oberndoerfer Is a Busy Golfer—Met. Advertising G. A., Plan for Season.

By FRED HAWTHORNE.

Although the snow lies to a depth of five or six inches on the rolling course of the Fox Hills Golf Club, over on Staten Island, and the sand traps are harboring miniature ice skating rinks, in the clubhouse there is bustle and animation, with the golfing season still dreary weeks distant.

Joseph J. O'Donohue, jr., president of the club, does not believe in letting the grass grow too long, either on the greens or under his feet, and has already attended to one important detail of a golf president's duties—namely, appointing his committeemen.

W. Roy Barnhill will be chairman of the tournament committee, and those serving with him will be George G. Worthley, Percy R. Parker, J. D. Barnhill, H. W. Bearman, E. H. Sykes and Richard R. Mamlok. L. G. Spindler will be the team captain.

The annual invitation tournament will be held June 22, 23 and 24, and in addition to the regular Saturday, Sunday and holiday handicap events there will be twenty special competitions for handsome trophies given by club members. Boy, hand me my niblick!

An item concerning young Herbert Oberndoerfer, seventeen-year-old prodigy of the Inwood Country Club, who are in receipt of a lengthy letter from one of Oberndoerfer's well wishers, disclosing the schoolboy's plans for the coming season on the links. Herbert is the present champion of the Public Schools Interscholastic Association, which seems eminently fitting, as Herbert claims to be founder of the association.

Oberndoerfer intends to compete in the metropolitan amateur and open championship tournaments and the junior metropolitan fixture at Englewood, June 27 and 28. In addition, of course, he will take in a dozen other tournaments in the metropolitan district.

The Inwood boy has a rating of 6 in the metropolitan list, and has been schooled in the finer points of the game by Herbert Strong, the Inwood pro, who predicts a brilliant future for his pupil. Oberndoerfer is credited with a round of the Van Cortlandt course in 70 strokes, and this impresses us more than anything else in his record, as we have hammered away on the public links with far less success.

On his home course Herbert is a terror, for last year he was a semi-finalist in the club tournament for the title, being beaten on the nineteenth hole by a fiendish stymie. The lad's game holds no fears for the youth, as he proved recently by making a sweep circuit of the Gimbel golf course in only one stroke above the professional mark set by Joe Mitchel. That's all for Herbert.

Tales of a Wayside Tee

By GRANTLAND RICE.

(NOTE.—This series will take up the play of leading American amateur golfers. It will not be biographical or statistical, but rather in the nature of random observations on some of the ways and achievements of our leading golf stars.)

No. 3—Francis Ouimet.

How did it happen that Francis Ouimet, who was only an ordinary golfer up to 1913, came forward with such amazing swiftness? Not even Ouimet himself can explain the sudden rise to fame. In 1911 he tried to qualify in the amateur championship and failed. In 1912, at Chicago, he tried again and failed. And then suddenly a new star had risen in the golfing sky.

First Jump Up.

The first time we ever saw Ouimet was at Garden City, September, 1913, when the qualifying round of the amateur championship was under way. He had just holed out on the 18th green when some one asked his score. "75," replied Ouimet quietly. Which started an outbreak of excitement, as 75 was then low by several strokes. And that this start was no flash was proved two days later when he led Jerry Travers, then amateur champion, through the 27th hole. Two weeks later Ouimet, who had never even thought of the Open Championship, had beaten Vardon and Ray in the greatest exhibition of golf ever given in America.

Beyond the Dope.

"How did I happen to get going so suddenly?" said Ouimet to our query. "I haven't an idea. All I know is that in playing over my home course at Woodland my best mark was 78. I averaged about 81 or 82 and could rarely beat this. Then one day I went out in the summer of 19 5 and had a 73, the course record then. After that I rarely got above 77, and was generally around 74 or 75. My game seemed to have come to me in one day."

Normal Type.

It has been said frequently that Ouimet is a golfer without nerves—that he is never upset. Nothing to it. There is no such golfer in existence. There never was. Ouimet against Vardon and Ray was absolutely cool and apparently indifferent. But two weeks before, against Travers, he had shown more than one sign of nervousness when Jerry began laying those full iron shots dead, and when Francis made his trip abroad in his first competition he was so nervous he almost missed the first ball, batting it at right angles on the ground through the crowd. And later on, against Travers, at Ekwanok, when Ouimet became amateur champion, in his first twelve holes was so nervous he could hardly sink a putt, missing several short ones and frequently taking 3 on the green.

Big Advantage.

Not that Ouimet is a nervous type. He simply has nerves, just as any other mortal has when things are not working right.

But he also has this advantage. He never lets his temper get the better of him, and you never see him fretting or worrying over a bad shot. As much as any other golfer we ever saw Ouimet takes the break of the game as it comes to him. He doesn't always expect to get a perfect lie nor to have all putts go down, so he is well fixed when the tide turns the other way—psychologically.

Best Shots.

Travis leads all American amateurs in direction with any club and is long on long approach putts dead. Travis leads all in driving iron play and putting within ten or twelve feet up the cup. Ouimet, all in all, is the best American amateur with the wood—that is, not only off the tee, but in bringing play through the green. He is a leader at getting up a brassie shot from a close lie when distance is needed and he must take a chance.

He has the knack of taking just a nip of turf with his brassie, and he plays it with a confidence that no one else has this side of the Atlantic divide.

Interlocking Grip.

Ouimet is one of the few star golfers who use the interlocking rather than the overlapping grip. In his wooden club play he also stands further away from the ball than most others, reaching out for the blow.

Always Up.

On short approaching or putting he will find him nearly always beyond the pin, rarely short.

Last summer, at Detroit, he was drawn against Chick Evans in the East-West competition. Chick had the better of it in that battle up to within twenty yards of the green. But it was noticeable on the majority of occasions that where Chick was short in his approaches, and as a rule short in his long putts, Ouimet was practically always on past the flag. He gave Evans a chance, and through this method won on the first extra hole.

Putting.

Ouimet, with Travers and Travis, helps form the star Putting Triumvirate. He is a wonder on a putt of from 10 to 15 feet, but often has a tendency to miss the shorter ones—the two or three or four footers.

He probably isn't quite as steady a putter as either of the other two, but once out into his top stride he can be more brilliant than either. The exhibition, under fire, that he gave at Brookline against Vardon and Ray, and then later against Travers, will never be forgotten. A 10 or a 12 foot putt was nothing.

Twenty-five Years Left.

Ouimet is barely 24 years old. If he has won the Open and the Amateur championships of his country. He has at least 25 years of competitive golf left, and if barred as a pro for going into the sporting goods business the game would lose in general interest more than most people know. Even if Ouimet is barred this spring as being ranked as a pro we do not believe that his judgment will be allowed to stand, and the majority vote of golf clubs is given a chance to find out just what American golfers desire. He is too fine a sportsman, too good a golfer, and has done too much for the golf in the U. S. A. to be pushed aside, while others who have committed offenses against amateurism far more flagrant have never been touched.

FRANK BAKER COMING BACK

JOHNNY EVERS AND HANK GOWDY, ON THEIR WAY TO MIAMI LOOK OVER THE YANKS.